12

GOD,

AND THE

WORD OF HIS GRACE.

A FAREWELL SERMON,

Preached in the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn,

MAY 5TH, 1872,

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following discourse, prepared amid the hurry and agitation of the last days of my pastorate in Brooklyn, is even more imperfect in the manuscript than it was in the delivery; and there is now no time to write it out and prepare it, as it should be, for the press. But the loving importunity of friends leaves me no option in regard to its publication. I commit it to their disposal, as a suitable memorial of the ministry which it closes. That ministry, incomplete as it is, has been pervaded by "the Word of His Grace;" and now the sorrow of parting from those who have so long received that Word from my lips, is relieved only by the blessed hope of meeting them again, to part no more, in "the inheritance of them that are sanctified."

H. J. V.

BROOKLYN, May 8th, 1872.

12

SERMON.

Acts 20, 32.—"And now brethern, I commend you to God and to the word of His Grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

WHETHER we consider the speaker from whose lips they fell, the audience to whom they were addressed, the circumstances under which they were spoken, or their own intrinsic meaning; the words of the text are full of tender and solemn interest. The great apostle to the Gentiles was making his last journey to Jerusalem. He knew that he could no more visit the countries through which he was passing—upon whose heathen darkness, his repeated missionary tours had left bright pathways of gospel light. Among the many churches he had founded in these regions there was one for which his great heart had a peculiar affection. I know not what bound him so tenderly to the saints at Ephesus: unless it was the memory of the conflicts and sufferings he had endured with and for them, or the prophetic vision of the grievous wolves which after his departure would enter in, not sparing the flock. To this church he had written an epistle which is at once the most doctrinal and the most tender of all his writings, revealing the very mysteries of the Gospel, and at the same time pouring out the desires of his own soul, that they might know the love of Christ to its infinite height and depth and be filled with all the fullness of God. And now to Ephesus, he sends a request that the elders, not, of course, excluding others who might accompany them, would meet him at Miletus. He would not go up to see them in their own city. He does not desire to give Demetrius and his craftsmen occasion for another uproar. He does not care to take leave of his friends in the presence of his enemies, or even before a crowd of curious spectators. The mellowness of mature age, and perhaps the shadows of approaching death,

have toned down the fiery zeal of former years. It seems to him that a retired spot on the sea-shore, with God's blue canopy of love over them, and the voice of the deep-sounding sea making sad, sweet music in their ears, will be the most suitable place for the farewell interview. The summons is obeyed with joyful alacrity. The journey of thirty miles on foot is a small obstacle in the way of hearing such a preacher, and meeting such a friend. When the company arrive their fatigue is forgotten in his presence; and it were hard to tell, whether in the tears they shed there is a predominence of sorrow, or of joy. The apostle is comforted and strengthened by their coming. He has schooled himself to look with composure into their faces, while he speaks not in words of lamentation and regret, but in words of mingled warning and good cheer, in a voice made sweet by sadness, yet strong with a high and holy purpose, like the thrilling sound of a bugle on the waters.

The little company as they gathered around him in some retired spot on the beach, presented a singular contrast with the crowd which used to assemble near by in the theatre of Miletus. Nor is the contrast less striking between the performances which are hailed with thunders of applause by that pleasure-seeking multitude—and the words which thrill the souls of those who gather in silence about the great apostle. That vast theatre is now a mouldering ruin, and its memorial has perished with it. But the words spoken by that despised apostle of Christianity to the little company of his disciples, are still instinct with spirit and with life, not only revealing the tenderness and magnanimity of the human heart from whose fulness they were utttered, but teaching for all time lessons of divine wisdom and consolation. The text we have chosen, as one out of many apples of gold in this network of silver—points out to us THE PERMANENT AND ALL-SUFFICIENT SOURCES OF HUMAN COMFORT, STRENGTH AND JOY. GOD; the WORD of His GRACE; the INHERITANCE OF THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED; these are the themes to which the apostle directed the attention of the sorrowing saints of Ephesus: these are the fountains of living waters to which he led these weary

ones for their refreshment on the desert shores of time. And now, even as the same stars which looked down on them are still shining on us, and the ocean which rolled at their feet sings the same song to those who walk to-day on its beach; God and the word of His grace, and the inheritance of them that are sanctified, present their glories for *our* contemplation, and open their treasures of consolation for *our* refreshment.

II. And now Brethren, I commend you to God.

(1.) To God as the infinite, eternal and unchangeable One. Even in an intellectual point of view, the theme is glorious. It offers a blessed rest for the mind. It stands like a rock amid the ebbing and flowing waters. Tossed to and fro by the conflicting opinions and shifting scenes of time, it is a blessed relief and repose to think that there is one Being who is eternal and immutable—upon whose nature and purposes there is no shadow of turning: whose absolute and perfect will is the centre and controlling power of the universe. And, how infinitely is the rest enhanced, when not only the intellect but the heart enters into it, and we can say with appropriate faith, "he is *my* rock"! All things else are mutable and passing away. Our riches are uncertain and deceitful. The honor that comes from men is but a shifty wind. Our friends are alienated or torn from our embrace. Our children are but birds on a tree, whose singing may be hushed by the wintry blast that drives them to summer climes. Our own life is but a vapour, that appeareth for a little while and vanishes away. Amid all these changes, God only is stable. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands: They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: they shall wax old as a garment, and as a vestment shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

(2.) I commend you to God as revealed and reconciled to us in Jesus Christ.

It is no sentimental conception of the divine Fatherhood to which we commend you; no poetic dream of natural

religion, woven by an eclectic philosophy which shuts its eyes to one half the facts it professes to generalize; but a conception of God which embraces indeed all the teachings of the flowers and the stars, and at the same time includes the testimony of the earthquake and the storm, the admonitions of conscience, and the voice of the whole creation groaning and travailing together in pain until now; a God, who, in his justice is a consuming fire, who will by no means clear the guilty, whose wrath is revealed from heaven against the unrighteousness of men; and yet a God long suffering, merciful, and gracious, reconciling the world unto himself in Christ —"not imputing their tresspasses unto them." * * *

(3.) I commend you to God not only incarnate in the person of Christ, but in *covenant* with Him as the federal head of all His chosen and believing people. The Eternal Father has made an agreement with the Eternal Son in behalf of all those who accept Him for their Saviour. This covenant has in it many glorious and blessed things. It is confirmed with the Father's oath; it is sealed with the blood of the Son. It gives to the Saviour all who receive Him, that he may give to them eternal life. It is illustrated and applied with many broad and precious promises. It pledges to all who are included in it, an entire freedom from the condemnation of the law, and a full adoption into the family of God. In the bonds of this covenant, He is their father in an infinitely higher and better sense than was ever dreamed of by natural religion. They are fellow-citizens of the saints; they are joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

To this God, infinite, eternal and unchangeable—revealed and reconciled, and covenanted to us in Jesus Christ—*I commend you.* Let us turn our thoughts and affections upon him none the less confidently, because the infinity of His being, the majesty of His estate, and mystery of His purposes surpass our comprehension. The rock to which we would lead you is higher than we; for that very reason let us come under its shadow and hide in its clefts. God, even our covenant God, has been the portion, the refuge, and the dwelling place of his people in all generations.

He is an ACCESSIBLE dwelling place. We have not to seek for Him in a far country. He is not far from any one of us. * * * His word is nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth. "Behold," says the voice from heaven, "I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut;" and the voice of the Saviour on earth expounds the revelation, saying, "I am the door, by me if any man enter he shall be saved. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. I am the way. If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also." And to the same effect is Paul's testimony: "through Him we have access by one spirit unto the Father. In Him we have boldness and access with confidence." Free access to God—and *with* Him, through Jesus Christ, the open door, is the great offer of the Gospel. Let us not complain that there is only *one* way into this strong pavilion; for this door is wide enough, and the invitation to enter is broad enough, and the way easy enough for all. Whosoever will may come; and by repeated coming we learn to know God as our dwelling, and go to Him more readily than we retire from the turmoil and cares of life to the sacred enclosure of home.

He is not only an accessible dwelling place, but He is a SURE refuge and defence in every time of trouble. "What time I am afraid," says David, in his sweet plaintive song, "I will trust in Thee." Many are the occasions of fear. Hosts of sin, and floods of ungodly men; dark forebodings of coming wrath shadowing the conscience; and rumours of change making the keepers of the house to tremble. How sweet is the voice of our covenant God saying, "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee, and hide thee for a little while, till the indignation be overpast." And what are these chambers of refuge, but the attributes of His own infinite nature. What a chamber is Omnipotence! How deep and strong its foundations! How secure its walls! Who can pluck us out of His hands? How safe is he to whom it may be said "the Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting army!" And what a chamber is wisdom! How wide its dimensions; how curious and ac-

curate its structure; how wonderful the combination of its parts; how resplendant and yet how chaste its garniture! Who can work like God who brings good out of evil and light out of darkness? And then what a chamber is love! How soft the light that streams through its pictured windows, even the light of God's reconciled countenance; how ravishing the music that swells through its lofty arches, even the songs of the ransomed; how rich the viands that are spread upon its tables, even righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! How precious the invitations and promises placed upon its portal and and its walls!

In these chambers of divine power, wisdom and love, the believing soul finds not only a refuge and defence, but consolation and rest. Whither shall we go when sick, and weary, and downcast, but to the bosom of our God in Christ? Human comforters are vain; except so far as they reveal His love and lead us to Him. O that we might learn this precious truth by experience! If we would only come to Him with the affectionate trusting spirit of a little child going to its mother; if, instead of morbidly craving pity from our fellow creatures, who never can fully underderstand nor relieve us, we would go with our complaints to Him who knows us altogether, how often would we find beauty for ashes and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Then at every new inroad of sorrow, and at every new turn in life's journey, we would say, "return unto thy rest, oh my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!" Then we would sing to Him who giveth songs in the night:

"Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to thy breast:
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will bring the sweeter rest.

O 'tis not grief to harm me
While Thy bleeding love I see;
O 'twere not in joy to charm me
Were that joy unmixed with Thee."

II. And now, Brethren, for the confirmation of all this, "I commend you to the Word of His grace"—to the written Word, which God has magnified above all His Name."

(1.) I commend you to the Scriptures as the only standard of truth and right—teaching us infallibly what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. The Scriptures not only contain, but they *are* His word—from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation. * * * It was all written under His superintendence and direction. It records everything and omits nothing which, in His judgment, we need to know concerning the subjects of which it treats. It is a complete revelation of His mind and will to us, for our salvation. It is "all given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly finished unto all good works." The Bible claims for itself a divine origin and a divine authority, and there is no consistent middle ground between the simple faith that receives it as a book "which has God for its author, truth without any admixture of error for its substance, and salvation for its end"—and the open infidelity which utterly rejects it as a human imposture. One thing is sure, we cannot in any true sense be followers of Christ, unless we accept the whole Bible as the infallible word of God. He put the seal of His approbation most emphatically upon the Old Testament Scriptures. He put Himself and His Gospel on trial before Moses and the prophets. "Search the Scriptures; what is written in the law; how readest thou?" was the challenge He constantly threw down before all gainsayers. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" * * * * And as if to put His sanction on these Old Testament Scriptures in the most intense and unmistakeable way—concentrating on them all the solemnities of heaven, earth and hell—He represents Abraham, the father of all believers, speaking from Paradise to a lost soul, in these

memorable words: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

His endorsement on the New Testament Scriptures, though given in a different way, is no less explicit. In the one case it was retrospective, in the other prophetic. He promised his immediate disciples that, in their teaching and labors for the establishment of His church, they would be divinely inspired and directed. It should be given them what they should speak. The spirit of their Father would speak in them. The Holy Ghost would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance. Hence they *claimed* to be divinely authorized and inspired. They had the mind of Christ. They spake not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. The Gospel they preached was not after man, neither did they receive it from man, neither were they taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ. The attempt to divorce Christianity from the Bible, to uphold faith in Christ, whether as a saviour, a pattern, or a teacher, aside from an implicit confidence in all the Scriptures as the infallible word of God, is a cunning device of the enemy, against which I warn you. It is the counterfeited bleating of the grievous wolves who do not spare the flock.

(2.) I commend you to the Scriptures as to the word of God's grace. On its pages, and in the way of salvation it reveals—"righteousness and peace have met together, mercy and truth have kissed each other." * * * It has many lights and shadows; but the lights prevail. On the dark back ground of the law, the Gospel stands out in vivid characters. Upon the description of our loathsome and fatal disease is endorsed the prescription of the divine and infallible remedy. Calvary responds to Sinai, even as Mount GEREZIM answered to Mount EBAL, and while the law thunders "cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in this book to do them"—the voice of love and mercy from the cross responds "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." O

blessed oracles! Like him they reveal to us—and whose wonderful title is—"the Word made flesh"—they are glorious not only with truth but with *grace*, and full of both as the sun is of light.

(3.) I commend you to the Scriptures as to the divine revelation of our destiny. They tell not only whence and what we are, but whither we are going. They warn us of judgment to come. They describe the doom of the unbelieving and impenitent. They unveil celestial worlds. They bring life and immortality to light; pour a clear and steady brightness into the gloomy grave, and fling a radiance of glory beyond, far down into wasteless ages.

(4.) I commend you to the Scriptures as to the book of consolation, in and through which God communicates his own blessedness to them that believe. True it contains many things hard to be understood. But only they that are unlearned and unstable wrest them to their own destruction. Even the mysteries of the Bible are full of comfort to a humble and trusting soul. As we gaze upward to their infinite height, and downward into their profound depths, we know that like the waters of the great sea, and the boundless expanse of the sky, they are clear as crystal to their utmost extent; that their seeming darkness is due only to our feebleness of vision, and, therefore, while we contemplate their greatness, a sense of our comparative littleness hushes us into repose. But how many plain and easy places does the Word of God contain! In what small words does He express the purpose and promise of His grace! How He weaves the image of all that is fair and beautiful in nature, of all that is tender and true in human relationships, with the assurances of His love and mercy. The illustrations of His promises are drawn from the tints of the rainbow, the royal array of the lily, the gentle dews of evening, the sweet morning light, the stars in the still evening sky, the clusters of the vine, the streams that flow among the hills and water the pastures of the wilderness; from all the most familiar and beautiful and blessed garniture of the every day world. And they are precious for this, if for no other reason,

that they make the earth, cursed as it is by sin, and darkened by sorrow, radiant still with the footprints and finger marks of our God in Christ. By linking these familiar objects with His eternal truth, and making them the pledges of His covenant faithfulness, He speaks not only to the understanding, but to the heart, especially to the sorrowing heart. As one whom his mother comforteth, so the Lord comforts thee, O thou afflicted and sorrowful one. The Bible is preëminently the Book of Comforts. Indeed, it is only when the night shades gather over the things of time and sense, that we can see clearly the radiance of its myriad stars. It has been from generation to generation a fountain of light and of joy to those who sit in the shadow of death; a river of life in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. What celestial light it has diffused in the chamber of sickness! What anthems of praise it has wakened in the dark cave and upon the stormy shore, whither persecution has driven those that love it! How it has pillowed the head of the soldier dying alone on the desolate field; cheered the heart of the sailor amid the ocean storm; comforted the prisoner in his lonely cell; made the mother of the poor man's children sing at her daily toil; and even come into the abodes of pleasure and folly to tell the world's jaded votaries of a better and more enduring substance. The word of God's grace is infinitely precious, because it is His Word. The Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon it. The Holy Shekinah dwells in it. It is the mercy seat from which the divine oracle gives answers of peace. The saints of all ages have come to it for guidance and refreshment. Jesus Christ read it on his mother's knee at Bethlehem; and now standing forth in his perfect manhood the consolation of Israel, the desire of all nations, says, "search the Scriptures, for they testify of me." The Written Word and the Incarnate Word are for ever identified, and the consolations of God dwell richly in both.

(5.) I commend you to the Word of God as the appointed means of edification in grace, and preparation for glory. The Scriptures are able to make you wise unto eternal life, to

build you up into a fitness for the inheritance of them that are sanctified. When our great Intercessor stood with his foot on the threshold of the Holy of Holies, and cast a loving glance backward upon those He was leaving in the world, He prayed, "sanctify them through Thy truth." And that there may be no mistake as to His meaning, He adds for our instruction, "Thy Word is truth." God's truth is the great instrument for the sanctification of men. There is a profound philosophy in the process. Our character is moulded by the reflex influence of the things we pursue. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. He that is born again is begotten of God by the word of truth. And this divine seed remains in him, the germ of eternal life. According to its growth, is the believer's increase in knowledge, in grace, in holiness, in every thing that transforms the soul into the likeness and fits it for the fellowship of God. And it grows by what it feeds upon: not by bread that perishes, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Let these inspired histories, stretching from the beginning to the end of time, and casting their prophetic glance far down into eternity; this divine philosophy, unfolding the mysteries of the Godhead; this celestial minstrelsy, blending the songs, which angels sang in the morning stars, with the anthems white-robed saints sing for ever in heaven; these doctrines full of grace and truth; these promises embodying the love and fidelity of God; these parables, weaving the beauties of all worlds into the illustrations of the truth, He brought into familiar contact with a man's soul, laying hold upon his intellect and heart, and intermingling with his daily thoughts and feelings; and they must lift him above sensual things, they must spiritualize and transform his nature. These are God's thoughts; the images that fill the Infinite mind; the meditations that gather like a halo around the fountain of light and life, and blessing. If a man would become God-like, let him take this Word, filled with the divine fulness, and empty it into his mind. Its doctrines will expand his intellect "to the height of that great argument which justifies the ways of God to men;" its precepts will fill his whole body with light; its exceeding great and

precious promises will make him partaker of the divine nature; and so make him meet to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light.

III. AND NOW, BRETHREN, I COMMEND YOU TO THE INHERITANCE OF THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED.

Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, cease your mourning over the changes of time, where you have no continuing city, and look away to that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Survey the glories, and count up the riches of your eternal inheritance! If you would fire your imagination with descriptions of its garniture, read the visions of John in the Apocalypse! If you would attain some adequate conception of its excellence, fill your soul with Paul's imagery of "the house not made with hands," and the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If you would apprehend at once the essence of its blessedness and the security of its possession, hear the prayer of the great Intercessor, "Father, I will that they, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory; and the glory Thou hast given me I have given them." It is not for lips of clay, even though these were touched with fire from God's altar, to describe what it is to be with Christ, and share his glory.

> "I know not, O, I know not
> What social joys are there;
> What radiancy of glory,
> What bliss beyond compare."

But this I know, that the inheritance of the saints is *undefiled.* It is the inheritance of them that are *sanctified.* In its pure atmosphere corruption cannot breathe; through its pearly gates there shall, in no wise, enter anything that worketh abomination. On its streets of burnished gold there shall be no stain of unhallowed feet. And moreover I know that this inheritance is eternal. Here the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; there the tree of life grows perennially in the new Eden by the living water. Here all is

shadow: there all is substance. Here all is temporal: there all is eternal. Here the bonds of affection and friendship, even between those who take sweet counsel together and go to the house of God in company, are weakened and sundered by human infirmity, by secular passions, by the all-consuming tooth of time; but there the eternal cycles revolve and bring no change to the blessed inhabitants, but the transition from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. The Lamb in the midst of the throne feeds them and leads them to fountains of living water, and God wipes all tears from their eyes. O house of many mansions! O audience chamber of God our Father! O bright transforming vision and fruition of Christ our Saviour! Sweet, perfect, eternal fellowship of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect! Thou city of our God, thou heritage of the saints, thou resting place of severed hearts! How dark, and cold, and fleeting, in comparison with you, are all the household joys, and social bonds of this present evil world. To this inheritance I commend you. Thither many whom you loved have gone. * * * God make it yours, and sanctify you by his truth, for an abundant entrance into its possession!

And now, brethern, to these expressions of my desires in your behalf I am constrained to add a few words personal to myself. Of the ministerial labors I have performed in this church, so far as their influence upon others is concerned, I have nothing to say. Their record is on high, and God only is competent to judge of their results. In reference to that matter I am neither exalted nor depressed, having nothing to boast of, save the grace of God, by which, supported still, I stand, and the cross of Christ in which I glory; and nothing to lament, save the consciousness of human weakness in the effort to magnify the riches of that grace, and commend to others the brightness of that glory.

But, while leaving its results unestimated in the hands of God, it is due to you and to myself, that now at the close of my ministry among you, the key note which has run through all its work and its sufferings should be sounded once more, clear and distinct as the blast of a trumpet. I

believe thoroughly in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, in the perfect harmony and co-ordinate authority of the Old and New Testaments, in the great Protestant doctrine, that the whole Bible is the only rule of Christian faith and practice, because it is not only the utterance of God's will, but the transcript of His nature. I reject the teachings of all churches, assemblies, and councils, and all the dictates of uninspired reason, whenever they come into conflict with the Word of God in its plain and obvious meaning; of which meaning the understanding and conscience of every individual must be the judge, subject only to the supreme authority of God. Moreover I believe that the church is not a human invention, nor a voluntary association, but a *divine institution*, established and equipped for the specific objects set forth in the written Word; that both in its invisible reality, as the holy church universal, and in its outward form as a visible organization, it is a kingdom not of this world; that it ought never to be identified with, nor subject to any human government, nor make itself a party to any secular strife; that its ministers, as ministers in the discharge of their official duties, owe *no allegiance*, save to the authority of Jesus Christ, of whom they are the accredited ambassadors; that the terms of its communion are simply the terms of salvation, and the bond of union among its members, not their agreement in secular interests, but their common union to Jesus Christ, their living Head, in whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase to the edifying of itself in love.

My whole ministry has been based upon, and pervaded by, these simple principles. I have never taught any doctrine which I did not firmly believe to be revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and which I was not ready to defend against all comers by an appeal to the divine law and testimony. I have never shrunk from the utterance of any doctrine or precept in the Bible because it would be unpopular, or bring upon me the censures of men. No one who has attended my preaching has been left in doubt as to what I believe to be the teaching

of the Bible in regard to the guilt of men, the holiness of God, the sufficiency of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, the salvation of them that believe, or the damnation of them that believe not. I have never enforced any doctrine by human authority, nor defended it by the speculations of human philosophy, nor asked, nor desired any man to accept my teaching, except so far as I could demonstrate to him that it was a fair exposition of the Holy Oracles: "Wherefore, I take you to record this day, that I am free from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." During all these years of toil, God's Word has been my meat and my song in the house of my pilgrimage. When weary and thirsty, I have not drunk at human cisterns, fetid with stagnant waters; but from that river of life, clear as crystal that flows from the throne of God. I have hid His word in my heart, and ruminated on it as I walked these streets, and meditated on it in the night watches; and it has often sung itself over in my soul like a skylark at the gates of the morning. Sweet has been the love and fellowship of living Christian friends; * * but sweeter still the communion of holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. During all these years I have communed with Moses on the Mount; worshipped in the tabernacle and followed the fiery cloudy pillar through the wilderness; stood with Isaiah beside the altar when his lips were touched with fire; listened to the beatitudes and invitations which flowed from the mouth of Him who spoke as never man spoke; heard Peter and Paul proclaim the Gospel and unfold the mysteries of redemption; and seen the light of eternal glory shining through the gorgeous transparencies of the Apocalypse. These are memories which being once graven on the soul can never be obliterated. They blend the earlier with the closing scenes of life into one experience, and make the glow of its setting sun only the mellow reflection of its morning light; they translate the Old Testament into the language of the New and write both in a monogram upon the tablets of the heart; yea, they unite patriarchs, prophets, and apostles with all who have obtained like precious faith, until the believer *is*

one with himself, and *one with Christ*, and one also *with all who are united to Him*—who is the living embodiment of all that is written, the Incarnate Word of God.

And now with these memories, and many more too tender and sacred to be rehearsed in this audience, I go forth to another field—weeping—but bearing precious seed—even the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. I go forth simply to sow that seed. I desire to have it distinctly understood, that my constraining motive in thus changing my field of labor, is neither southern *sympathy*, nor northern *repulsion*. The voice of my Royal Master, says, "let the dead bury the dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." And whatever may be my personal or political sympathies (in regard to which there is nothing which I would either conceal or confess); I am going simply because there is reason to believe I can preach the Gospel there more successfully than here. Time, will vindicate the purity, if not the wisdom of my purpose; if time does not, eternity will, and with this I am satisfied. Meanwhile, if any of you, who have known and loved me for my works' sake, and stood by me through good and evil report, even though you did not agree with me in all things—and especially any who have misunderstood my principles or doubted my sincerity in their utterance—should come within the sound of my voice or the reach of my hand in the good land to which I am going—you will find the same welcome and the same loving ministrations for Christ's sake, which I have been accustomed to extend to Christian men and women coming hither from the South.

The years of toil and conflict through which the good hand of God has brought me—have left a twofold impression on my soul. *First*, a deeper conviction of the faith for which I have earnestly contended, and mean to contend till death; and, *secondly*, a more loving spirit towards all the followers of Christ. Thank God there is no wrath or bitterness in the cup of sorrow in which I pledge you ere I go; no dead fly in the box of precious ointment whose odors will refresh me on the way. But there is a hunger and thirst at my heart that can never be satisfied, until I am received into

the confidence, not only of you who have loved and will never forget me—but of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are built up by the word of His grace, and have their inheritance among them that are sanctified.

Before I cease, let me once more proclaim, in a few words, the burden of the everlasting Gospel. Let me tell you again of the salvation there is in Jesus. The first sermon I preached to you, as your pastor, was on the text "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;" and now I would fain express the very essence of that Gospel into the concluding sentences of the last. This is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Come unto the Saviour all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and he will give you rest. There is no other name given under Heaven whereby we must be saved. There is no need of any other. In Him there is full and free redemption. He is able and willing to save to the uttermost. He will in no wise cast out any one that comes to Him. O come to Him in this the day of your merciful visitation. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. Let not this, my last message, be remembered with hundreds which are recorded against some of you in God's book of remembrance. I testify in His name "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be dammed."